

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Land Management  
Vale District Office  
Baker Resource Area**

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

ORE-05129 Duke to Halfway 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild  
Environmental Assessment  
NEPA Register Number DOI-BLM-OR-V050-2015-29-EA

**Introduction**

The Baker Resource Area, Vale District, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze a proposed rebuild of Line 216, authorize existing and proposed roads used to access the transmission line facility, and allow IPC to continue to operate and maintain the transmission line and road network. The EA is summarized and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Both are available at the BLM office listed above, and on the internet at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/index.php>

**Summary of the Actions described in the alternatives**

The BLM has prepared the EA to analyze the expected effects of these actions:

**Under the No Action Alternative**, the BLM would not approve IPC's SF299 (Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal lands) as submitted on June 12, 2014, no modifications would be made to BLM ROW Grant ORE-05129, and IPC would not rebuild the transmission line. The existing line would remain in place in its current location, and the proposed realignment options would not be implemented.

**The Proposed Action** is to amend IPC's existing grant (ORE-05129). The amendment is necessary to facilitate a proposed rebuild and reroute of Line 216, authorize approximately 7.4 miles of existing and proposed service roads used to access the transmission line facility, and allow IPC to continue to operate and maintain the transmission line and road network.

**Context**

The project is located near Pine Oregon in Baker County and would have local impacts on the affected interests, lands and resources similar to, and within the scope of, those described and considered in the Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (BRMP/FEIS, 1989). There would be no broad societal or regional impacts which were not considered in the BRMP/FEIS. The actions described in the EA represent anticipated program actions which comply with the BRMP/Record of Decision (ROD, implementing realty management programs within the scope and context of this document.

Line 216 is located in eastern Oregon and extends from IPC's Brownlee Dam generating facility to its Halfway Substation near Pine, Oregon. The line extends across public lands under the jurisdiction of the BLM and private lands. ORE-05129 authorizes an 80-foot-wide ROW amendment covering 5.57 miles across public lands.

## **Intensity**

I have considered the potential intensity and severity of the impacts anticipated from the implementation of a Decision on this EA relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

### **1. Would any of the alternatives have significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** The proposed action would not have significant beneficial or adverse impacts because any relocation of the line outside of the existing 80-foot ROW corridor will be within or adjacent to other like ROW corridors such as roads, where disturbance has already occurred and new disturbance will be short-term in length for construction and periodically for maintenance.

Under the no action alternative, no new disturbance would occur and there would be no relocation of the line.

### **2. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on public health and safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** IPC will implement feasible and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts during relocation activities and will follow stipulations as attached to the ROW grant (Exhibit A).

If any emergency situation arises during relocation activities, IPC will take immediate corrective action to fix the problem, safeguard human health and prevent damage to the environment. Actions are frequently the same as those that occur during routine Operations & Maintenance (O&M) activities. (e.g.: structure replacement, road repair).

### **3. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on unique geographic characteristics (cultural or historic resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (ACECs, RNAs, significant caves)) (40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** Under the proposed action, cultural resources will be completely avoided as the rebuild will largely span these sites. A qualified archaeologist will be on site to provide avoidance flagging and monitoring to ensure no damage will occur. There are no other areas with unique geographic characteristics that would be affected.

Since no relocation would occur there would be no affect under the no action alternative.

**4. Would any of the alternatives have highly controversial effects (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** Controversy in this context means disagreement about the nature of the effects, not expressions of opposition to the Proposed Action or preference between the alternatives. No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the alternatives beyond those analyzed in the 1989 Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan (BRMP).

**5. Would any of the alternatives have highly uncertain effects or involve unique or unknown risks?**

*No*

**Rationale:** The analysis has not shown there would be any unique or unknown risks, nor were any identified in the BRMP/FEIS.

**6. Would any of the alternatives establish a precedent for future actions with significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** IPC is a large company that provides services for many customers where erecting and maintaining a power line are common projects. This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The BLM regularly authorizes ROW applications of this nature.

**7. Are any of the alternatives related to other actions with potentially significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** The area proximate to the project site is rural and relatively undeveloped and limited development/activity is expected to occur adjacent to the project corridor. With the exception of continued operation and maintenance (which are expected to continue into the foreseeable future) to keep Line 216 operable, livestock grazing, and recreational use activities, the BLM is not aware of any formal proposals or any projects engaged in some permitting process within the project vicinity.

**8. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on scientific cultural or historic resources, including those listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Resources (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** The Proposed Action will not adversely affect districts, sites, historic trails, structures, or other objects listed or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of

Historic Places. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys and through project design, no adverse impacts to cultural resources will occur.

**9. Would any of the alternatives have significant adverse impacts on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** Streams that are located on BLM administered lands and are crossed by the Proposed Action do not flow year round and would most likely be dry during construction (proposed October, 2015). The Proposed Action is not expected to impact bull trout critical habitat because of this.

Since no relocation would occur there would be no affect under the no action alternative.

**10. Would any of the alternatives have effects that threaten to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10))?**

*No*

**Rationale:** The alternatives do not threaten to violate any law. The alternatives are in compliance with the BRMP/Record of Decision (ROD), which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands.

**Statement of Finding**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, the consideration of the intensity factors described above, and all other information available to me, I have found that: (1) the Proposed action and No Action alternative will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the BRMP/FEIS 1989; (2) the Proposed Action and No Action alternative are in conformance with the BRMP ROD; (3) there would be no adverse societal or region impacts and no adverse impacts to the affected interests; and (4) the environmental effects, together with the proposed project Design Features, against the tests of significance (described above and found at 40 CFR 1508.27) do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an EIS or supplement of the existing EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.

  
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Lori D. Wood  
Baker Office Field Manager  
Vale District BLM

  
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Date